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From the Ambassador's Box

By A. M. DAVIES OGDEN

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The big flower filled drawing room was brilliant with afternoon sunshine. Through the open window came the sound of the trot of horses' feet as they passed on the broad "Unter den Linden." Ransome Prentice looked about him with a sigh of satisfaction. It was good to be back in Berlin. Then he smiled at the girl who was handing him a cup of tea.

"So here I am at last," he said. "And now, tell me the news. You left America so suddenly that I had no chance to come and bid you goodby. How do you like your elevation to the rank of ambassador's daughter? And has anything exciting happened thus far? You see, I had to follow just to hear it all." The girl hesitated, playing with the spoons on the dainty tea table.

"There is not much to tell," she answered slowly. "And yet there is one thing," glancing across at him. "I think you will be pleased, as it is largely due to your instrumentality. I should never have—have known him so quickly had it not been that, owing to your old friendship, I already felt as if he were no stranger when we met. Of course you can guess whom I mean. It is not announced yet, but I am going to marry Max von Witzleben."

The man's cup clattered in its saucer. "You—to marry Max?" he repeated. Then, "Do you—do you care for him so much?" he asked.

For a moment Miss Freeman frowned. But it was only Ransome. He and she had always teased and questioned and confided in each other. Yet she paused over the answer.

"I—I do not think that I am the kind to care very deeply for any one," she said soberly. "I admire Max. You have always told me how noble he was; how brave. And I adore bravery. My idea of his character is really drawn largely from your letters."

Prentice's lips twisted into a smile. "I was an enthusiastic chap in those days," he commented dryly. "I hope you have some better foundation for your affection than letters written by a boy in the university. But I am forgetting what was partly my errand this afternoon. "Buffalo Bill" is to open in Berlin tomorrow afternoon, and I thought perhaps you would like to go. It is only patriotic for the Americans to turn out. Should you care?" Miss Freeman nodded.

"I suppose it would be the proper thing to do," she agreed. "I have not seen 'Buffalo Bill' since I was a child. They sent father a box, but he does not care to go, and I had not thought about it. Suppose you come with us. I will ask Max, and we can take Fraulein."

A few minutes later Prentice rose to take his leave, and it was not until after his departure that Miss Freeman remembered that he had forgotten to congratulate her. For the rest of the day the girl was decidedly absent-minded.

But the next afternoon, seated in the box of honor in the big open air arena, Miss Freeman appeared to have quite regained her normal spirits, chattering gayly with both men. Von Witzleben, precise, neat, with parted hair and pointed mustache, sat on her right, and the girl glanced critically from his somewhat impassive face to that of the American, with its keen dark eyes and steady, clean cut mouth. The study of the two men was more absorbing than the show. Her attention had wandered from the ring and the flourish of trumpets which heralded the Deadwood coach caused her to start. The next moment a man pushed his way to their box and bowed.

"Colonel Cody would be honored if any of the American ambassador's guests would wish to ride in the Deadwood coach," the man suggested courteously. Miss Freeman, in sudden mischievous, looked at her fiance.

"What do you say to it?" she queried demurely. The German gazed back in horrified disapproval.

"You go around in that coach and make a spectacle of yourself," he gasped, "before all these people! Aber, what a shocking idea! I could not allow it."

Into the girl's eyes there came a sudden gleam. She had not meant to do this thing. But ever since her spoiled babyhood a dare had been to her spirit like fire to gunpowder. She lifted her head.

"Thank you. We shall be glad to accept," she said to the man, who still stood, hat in hand, awaiting her decision. "If you are afraid, pray remain here," she added defiantly to Von Witzleben. "Will you come, Ransome?" "But"—began he. One glance at her set mouth showed the futility of remonstrance. And wherever she called he would follow, be the consequences what they might. In silence he let her precede him down the steps. Von Witzleben bringing up a sulien rear. The fraulein left behind wept in unheeded protest.

It was not until the coach had fairly started that Miss Freeman realized all that she had brought upon herself. From her childhood she had always detested firearms. And these pursuing Indians! But, without flinching, she bore it all—the crack of rifles, the smoke which choked eyes and mouth, the fiendish yells. Then all at once she became conscious that the coach was swaying and bumping strangely. A man sitting opposite her suppressed an oath.

"I told BUJ to exercise them horses,"

he muttered. "And this blamed ring has mighty short corners. You better hold on tight," he added to the girl, "if this rickety old thing does break loose or turn over," expressively. Miss Freeman felt her heartbeats quicken. There was danger then—real danger. From the box came the driver's voice in frantic abjuration to the now thoroughly frightened animals. Miss Freeman turned toward Von Witzleben.

"Max," she whispered. But the German, his face ashy, his eyes fixed and staring, sat with strained fingers clutching at the wooden door. He had quite forgotten the girl. A little sob broke from her parted lips. Were they going to die? A strong hand closed over hers, and opening her eyes, through the smoke she saw Ransome, steady, calm, self controlled.

"We shall pull through all right," he said. "Don't be frightened, dear." The girl, conscious only of the word which had slipped inadvertently from his lips, caught her breath in the sudden shock of a great revelation. Ransome loved her—Ransome!

All at once she comprehended why it was that she had hesitated to announce her engagement until Ransome should learn of it, why it was that she had judged Von Witzleben from Ransome's standpoint rather than her own, appreciated that it had been the fact of his intimacy with Ransome which had been his chief attraction and how near she had been to never knowing. Now at last, in this supreme moment, she grasped the truth; knew that even as Ransome loved her, so she loved him. And whether death or life lay before them, with that knowledge in her heart, that touch on her hand, she was content.

And then with one strong, mighty pull from above the horses trembled down to quiet.

For a day or so the Berlin papers were rather sharp in their criticism of the girl who had rendered herself so conspicuous. No equally well born German girl would ever have done such a thing, they declared. But Miss Freeman, utterly glad in her new found happiness, only smiled in undisturbed thankfulness.

SPRING FASHIONS.

Ugly Automobile Costumes and Some Really Pretty Dresses.

Sweet and pretty as women generally manage to make themselves look do they make themselves ugly and homely for their automobile trips. This reflection was forced upon me as I looked at two ladies who were choosing their outfits for this dangerous but evidently exciting sport. They were going south, where the weather did not permit of the great, clumsy fur things which they had been making themselves hideous in all winter. One coat finally chosen by a lady (whose husband upset the machine before he reached Palm Beach, I read in the papers) was long, reaching quite an inch below the bottom of her skirt. The material was thick cravenette, such as is used in men's rain coats. This was almost shapeless and belted in at the back. Down the front there was a wide plastron of fine dressed leather. It was so arranged that it could be left off if not needed, as it buttoned on both sides all the way down. This, I suppose, is to protect the chest. Over the shoulders is a cape made of the leather and a capuchin hood, which can be drawn up over the cap. If there is a more unbecoming thing for a woman than one of these caps I do not know what it is, and, above all, when the hood is brought up over the peak, leaving the crown to stick out like a mushroom. And, as if this were not enough, there are about six veils all available to add to the structure. No woman is not beautiful in an automobile suit.

The other suit had a really pretty dress of soft gray cloth, with a coat of the same that reached to the knees lined with Siberian squirrel. The big sleeves had deep velvet cuffs to catch and hold the dust, while there was a horribly ugly hood with a short cape, and then a long one below made of gray cravenette also. This was lined with silk, I think. The object was to have the rain proof cape cover and protect the shoulders. Now, I like to see lovely woman look lovely always, and that is why I see no beauty in automobiling costumes.

I noted with pleasure that among the really elegant outdoor coats the new redingote, which has been revived for the coming spring. This always graceful garment is made coat shaped in the back, having exactly the finish of a



NEW SPRING SUITS.
 man's coat, while it is cut away in front, allowing for a pretty and stylish vest of satin, velvet or other material, and having shawl revers. The sleeves are the sensible and comfortable coat,

with full tops. Cloth, cheviot and tweeds, all of solid colors, make up handsomely in this style. Such a costume is quite fine enough for any outdoor occasion. Several suits with the redingote effect are shown in velveta, which proves that we have not finished our velvet styles yet.

Changeable taffeta is seen again, too, in several very pretty spring gowns for visiting and teas and other semigrand functions. A case in point is shown here, a silk gown, with one flounce of the same, headed by two folds of the silk, edged with accordion ruffles of chiffon in two thicknesses. The silk is dove colored, and one of the chiffon ruffles is red and the other blue, which give the changing effect. The waist is in the same old blouse shape, almost covered with lace. The cape—and capes are many this year—is of pastel blue cloth, with fancy castle braid effects at the yoke and brelouques of the same.

Among the newest of the importations in dress goods for the early spring I saw some that are finer, richer and more beautiful than I have ever seen. Each season sees something new and some new perfection. There is a crepe de chine, which is polka dotted in black, and the cunning weaver has made those dots look like steel on the black. Panama cloth is a soft and fine weave, sometimes left plain and again with dots or other fine figures in the weave. Gypsy cloth and another called powderette with tiny specks over the surface, lizard with scales like that reptile, granite with the roughish surface so much admired for tailor suits, queen's granite, a still finer rough wool, minouette, which has a close weave most elegant and fine; broadcloth of various weights and in all colors, and camel's hair, which is in for a long season of popularity. But for every day use the mohairs in many varieties of weave and color and the cravenettes will be favorites. There are also roxana, prunella, colliennes, crepe de Paris, all wool china crape and any amount of silk and wool mixtures in thin velvets. There are clairette and battiste, tamise and so many different thin and transparent wool goods that I cannot remember them.

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